

Ward Two Planning Initiative: Shaping the Future for Somerville's Southern Edge

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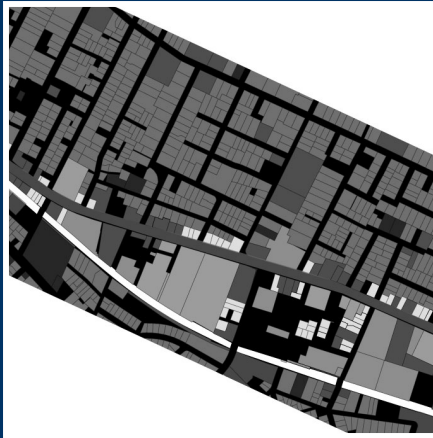
City of Somerville

Mayor's Office of Strategic Planning and
Community Development

11 May 2005



Overview of
Ward Two



Analysis

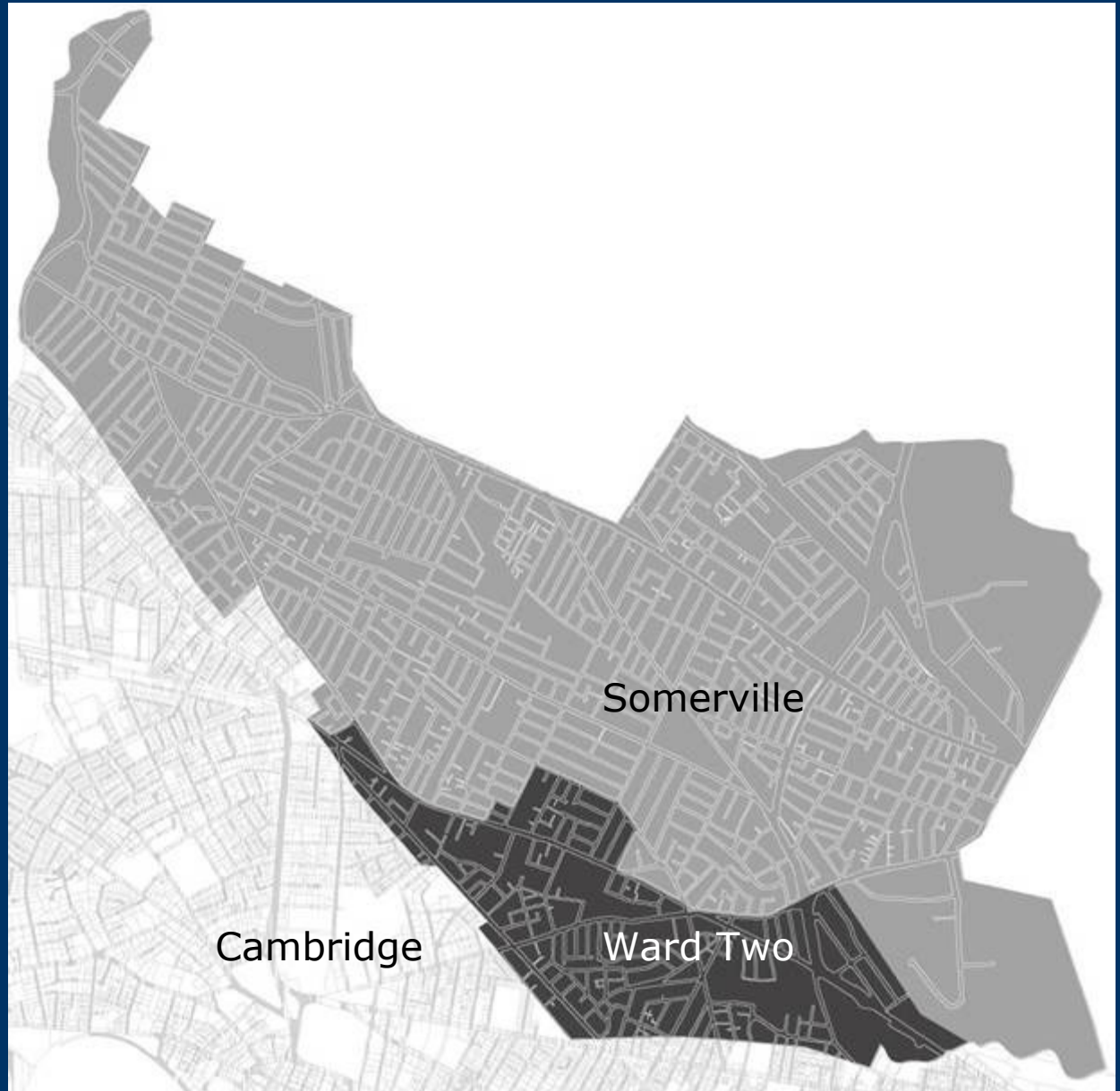


Momentum



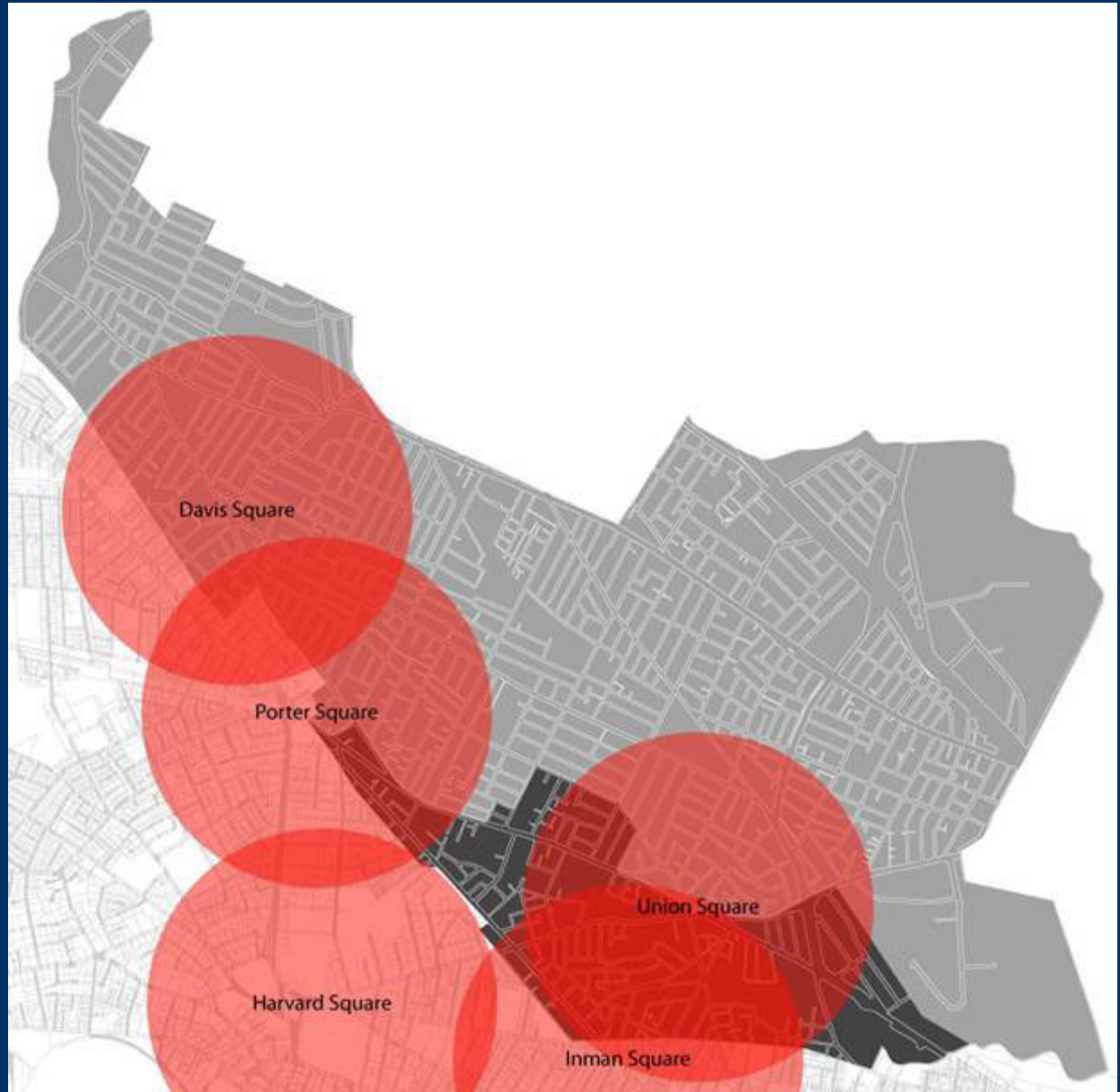
Futures

Location



Location

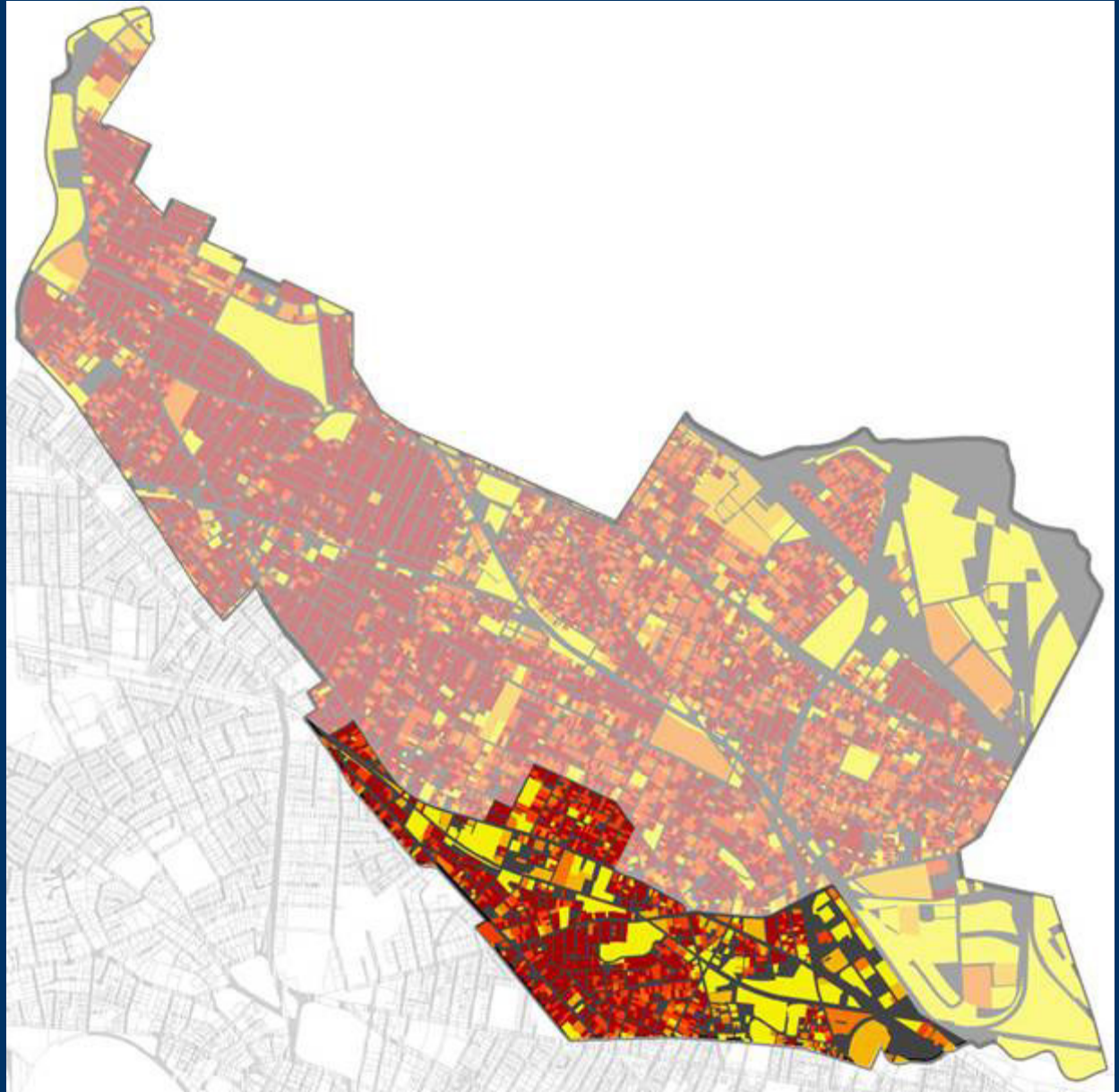
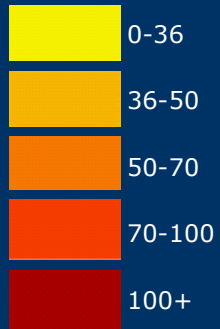
- Proximity to major squares in Somerville and Cambridge
- Distances
 - Porter Square to Union Square: 1.1m
 - Harvard Square to Porter Square: 1.05m
 - Harvard Square to Union Square: 1.28m
 - Inman Square to Union Square: .45m



10-minute walking radius

Total Assessed Value per SF of Land

- Major parcels in Ward Two have low values
- In comparison - \$124.32 value/SF in Davis CBD



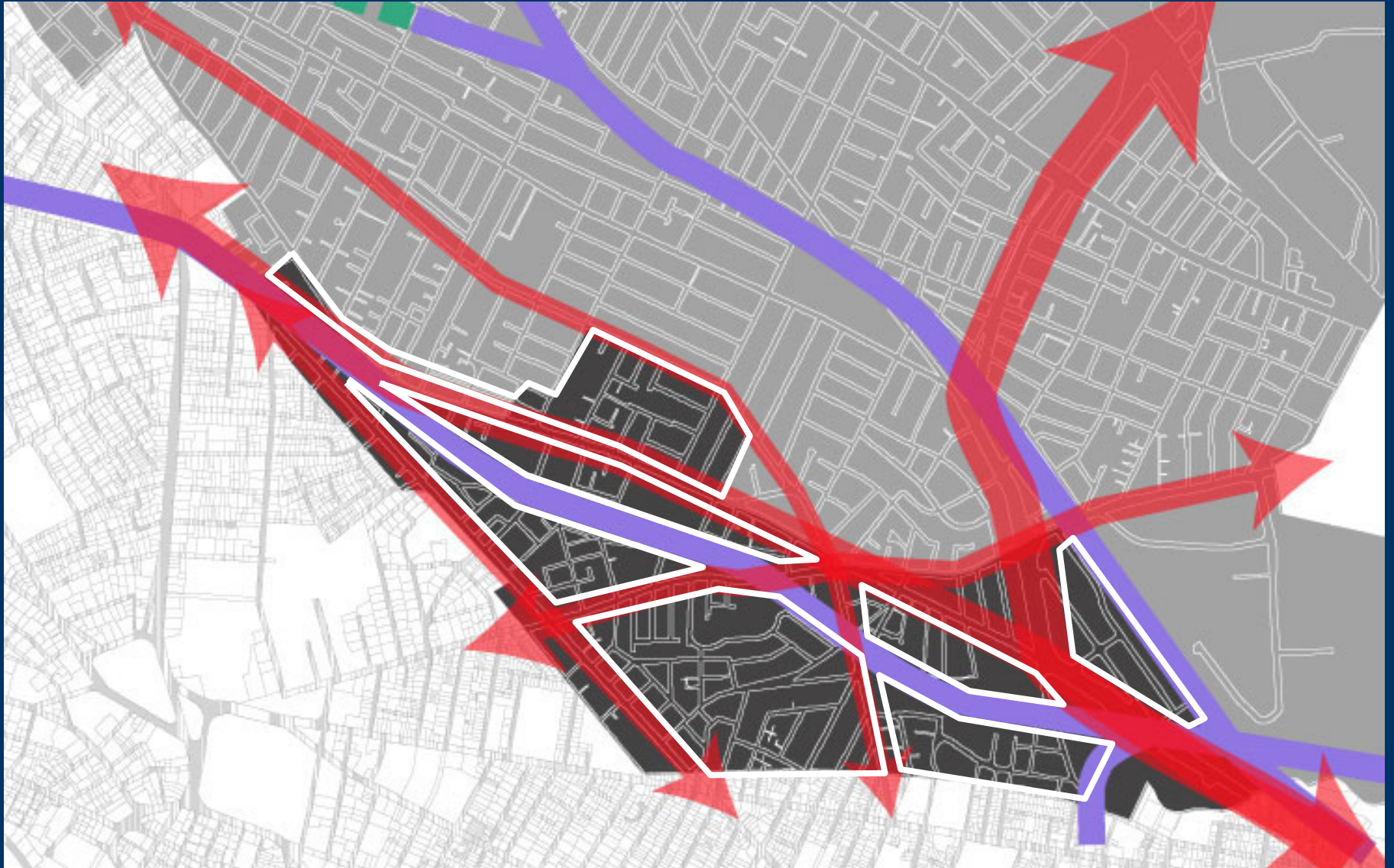
Major Infrastructure in Ward Two

- All Major infrastructure that moves through Ward Two



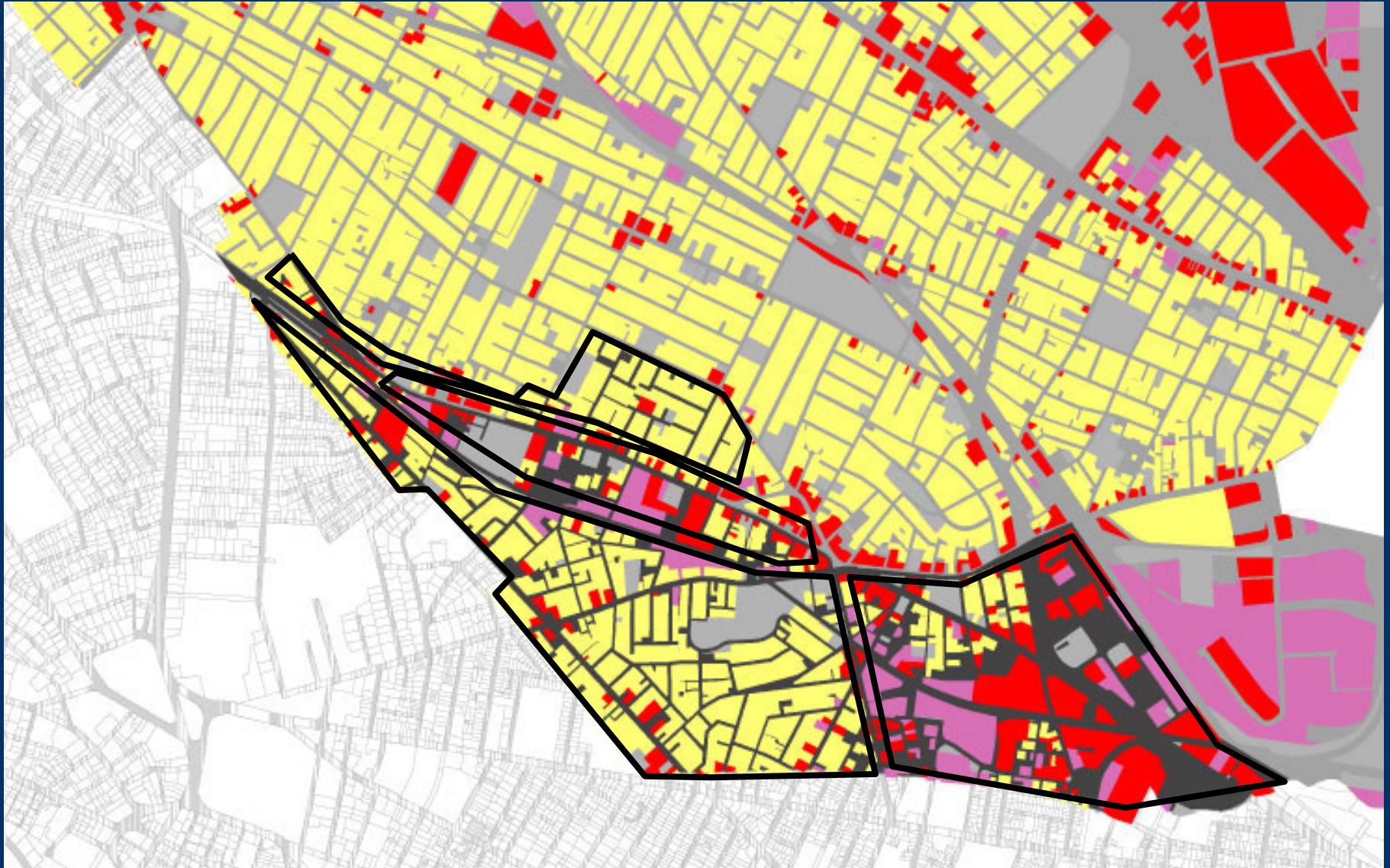
Planning Process

- Organized around the areas formed by infrastructure and thoroughfares



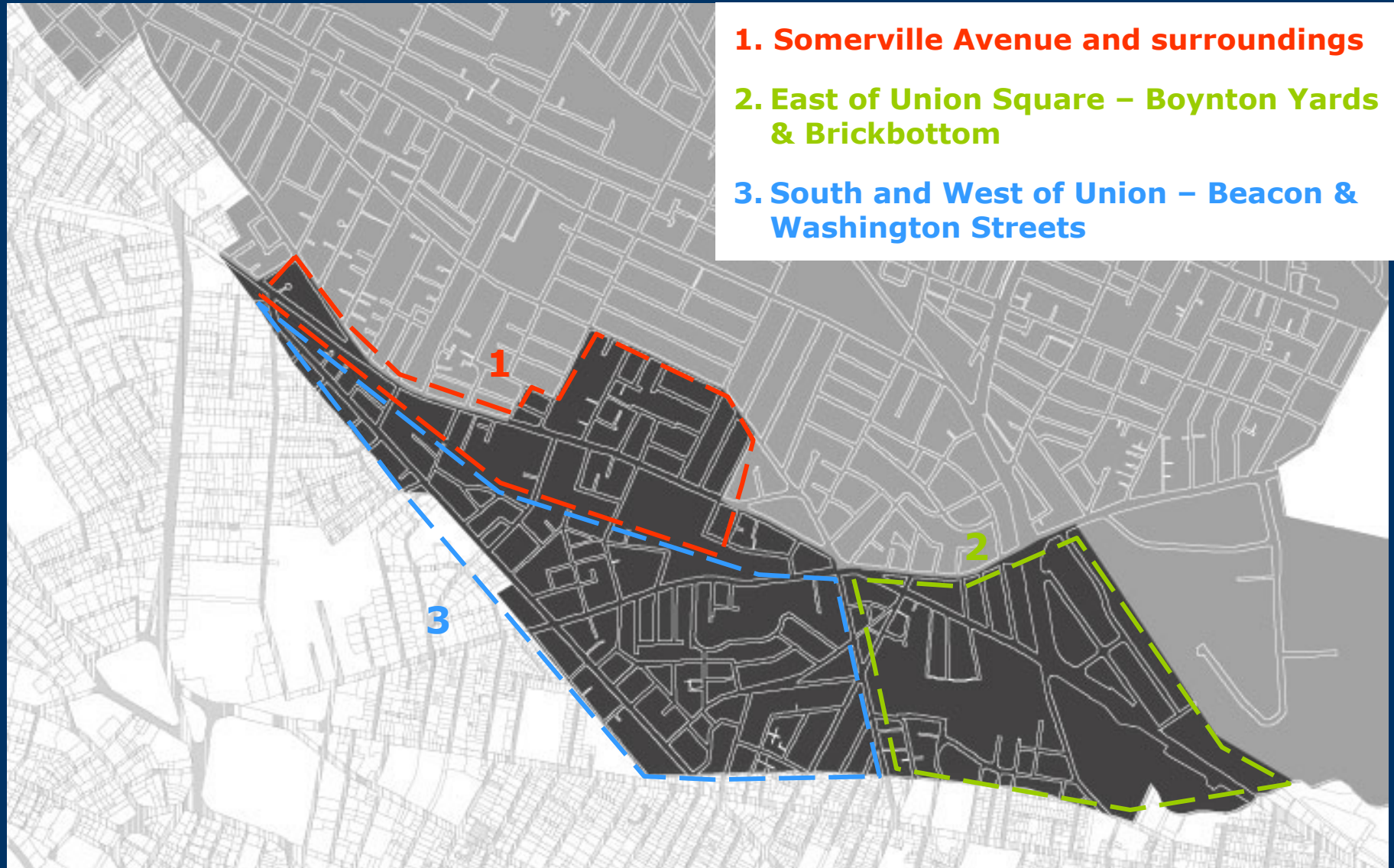
Planning Process

- Organized around land use patterns



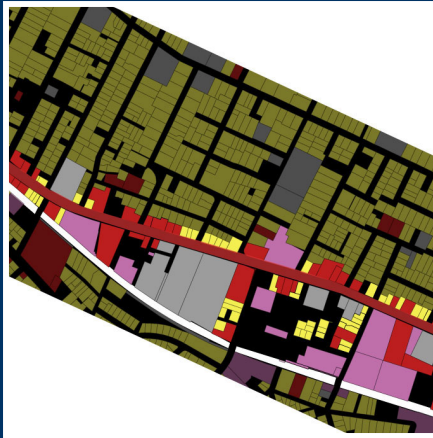
Planning Process

- Three areas of focus





Overview



Analysis of
Somerville
Avenue

- Access
- Zoning & Land Use
- Business Mix & Clusters
- Images
- Underutilized Parcels



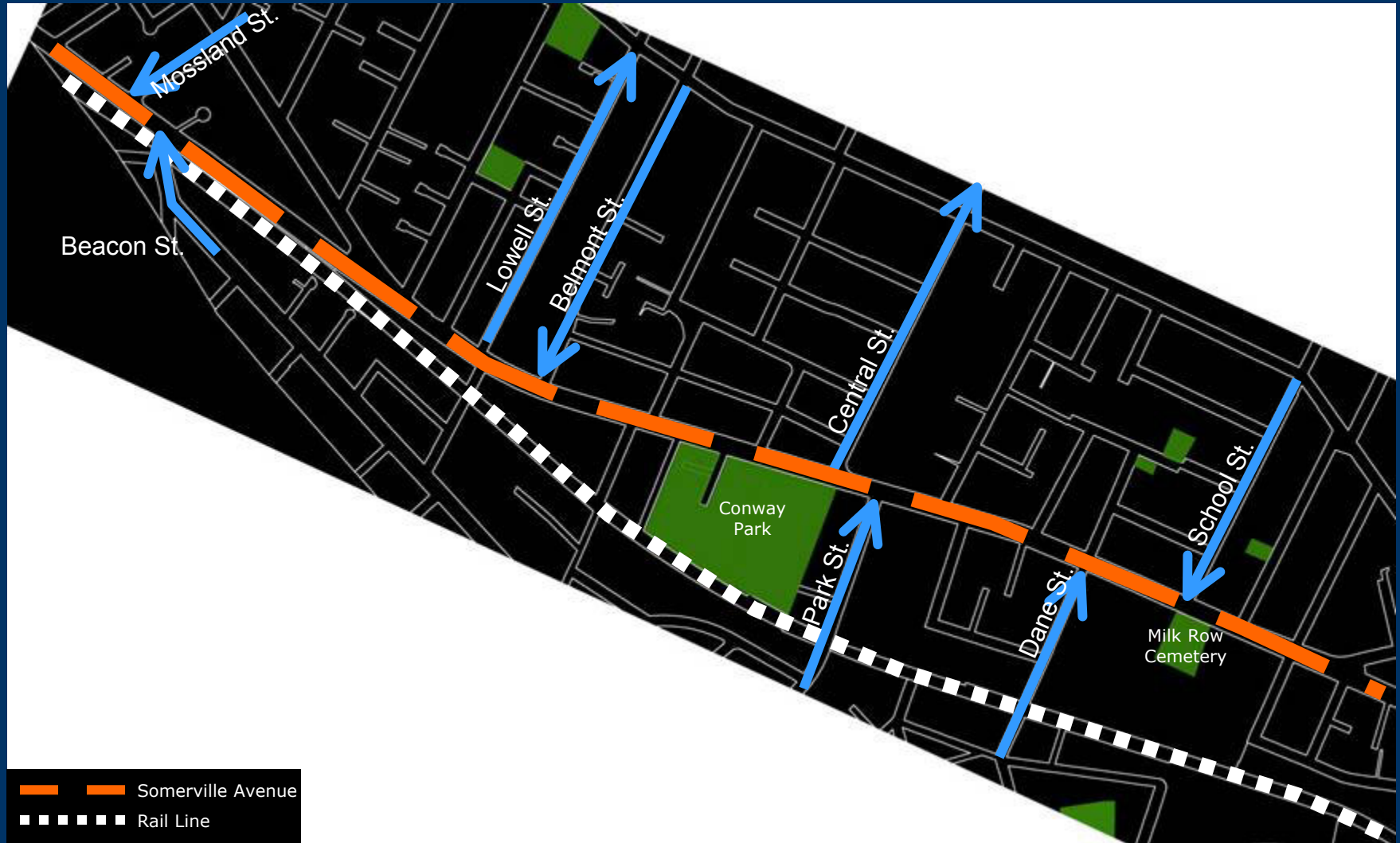
Momentum



Futures

Access

- Very few north-south connections go through
- Rail Corridor acts as a Barrier



Existing Zoning

- Most parcels fronting Somerville Avenue are in Business A Zoning



Land Uses Along the Avenue

- Mixture of uses



Existing Business Mix

- Market rents in the area vary wildly
- Based on limited returns in the area, the average market rents
 - Office Space: 500 – 1000 SF = \$12/SF
 - Retail Space: 800 – 2000 SF = \$14/SF
 - Cambridge – approx \$30/SF for commercial space

Business Type	Total	Local/Regional Chain	National Chain
Auto Related	13	1	3
Health & Body Services (Salon)	8	1	
Retail Shops	8		2
Restaurant, fast food, pizza, sub, coffee shop	7		3
Supermarket / Convenience Store	5		4
Government/Educational/Religious	4		
Bar/Entertainment	4		
Light Industrial (Bakery), Storage	5	1	1
Services (Laundromat)	3		
Financial, Legal, Tax	2		
Real Estate Offices	2		1
Liquor Store	1		
Medical Offices	1		
TOTAL	62	3	13

Clusters – Potential Activity Nodes

- Gateway opportunity – views of Boston
- Major intersection – drawing people from Porter and Union Squares
- Union Square proximity



Images Along the Avenue



Images Along the Avenue



Images Along the Avenue



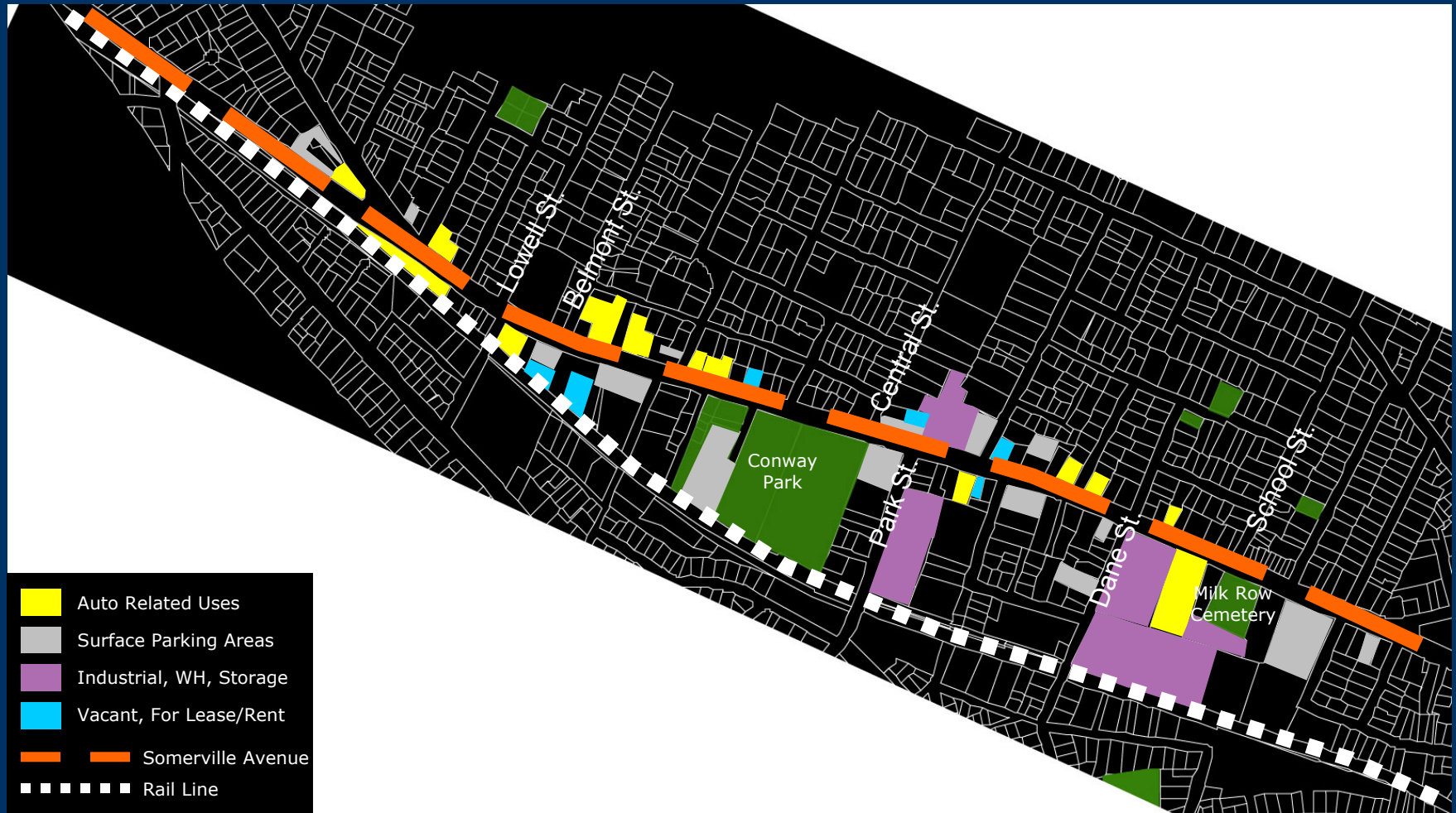
Images Along the Avenue

- Impact of storefront improvements with glass building frontage, street trees and planters



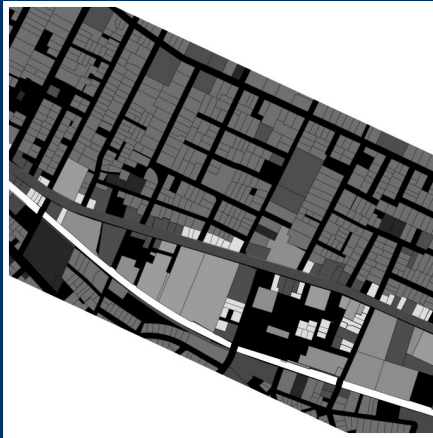
All Underutilized Parcels

- 'Soft' analysis – properties that are not built out to full potential and could be redeveloped and changed at some point in the future
- More than one quarter of the parcels that front Somerville Avenue are underutilized





Overview



Analysis



Momentum



Futures

- Somerville Ave. Improvements
- Union Square Activity
- Recent Development Projects

Somerville Avenue Improvement Project



Existing Conditions

Somerville Avenue Improvement Project

- Walkway Improvements and improved crosswalks
- Additional Trees and new benches and trash receptacles
- Bike lane
- Improved lighting (traffic & pedestrian scale) and additional traffic signals
- Better signage for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians



Typical Sections along Somerville Avenue after improvements

Power of Streetscape Changes

- Brighton Ave, Brighton



Power of Streetscape Changes

- Huntington Ave, Boston



Power of Streetscape Changes

- Main Street, Franklin



Power of Streetscape Changes

- Somerville Avenue



Union Square

- Union Square Main Streets (\$75,000 federal funds)
 - Public/private partnerships
 - Promotion of Square
- Municipal Redevelopment Study (\$42,000 state grant)
 - Planning and redevelopment of key municipal properties:
 - Kiley Barrel
 - Public Safety Building
 - Recreation Building (Walnut St.)
 - SCAT/MAPS
- ArtsUnion Grant (\$100,000 state/federal funds)
 - Events/programming
 - "Street Furniture"
 - Zoning Study



SCAT Building



View down Somerville Avenue

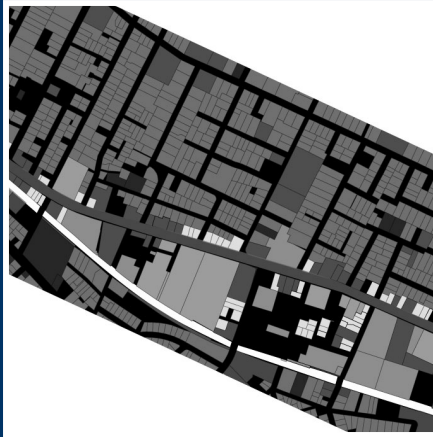
Ward Two Development Projects (1999-Present)

- a. 27 Osgood Street – 14 Units, November 2004
- b. 515 Somerville Avenue – 36 Units – April 2005
- c. 23-25 Lake Street – 2 Units, February 2002
- d. 24 Lake Street – 12 Units, January 2003





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Futures

Street Comparisons – Broadway, Inman Square



Street Comparisons – Massachusetts Ave, Arlington



Street Comparisons – Beacon Hill



Street Comparisons – Newbury St, Boston



Street Comparisons – Washington St, Boston



Street Comparisons – Centre St, Jamaica Plain



Street Comparisons – Denver



Street Comparisons – Streetscape



Opportunity

- Existing mix of business activity
- Street improvements will increase pedestrian access and mitigate traffic impacts
- Large parcels with potential to be redeveloped

